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THE FLAG*

foggy state of the atmosphere, the distance cannot be more than twelve or fifteen miles."

Captain Gould made a sign of assent, and the boatswain nodded.

" So with a good breeze blowing towards the northward/" Fritz went on, " two hours should be enough to take us to it\*"

" Unfortunately/<sup>5</sup> said Frank, " the breeze is very uncertain, and seems to be inclined to go back, If it doesn't drop altogether I am afraid it may be against us."

" What about the oars ?" Fritz rejoined,

" Can't we take to the oars, my brother and James, and I, while you take the tiller, bos'un ? We could row for several hours."

" Take to the oars! " Gould commanded, in an almost inaudible voice.

It was a pity that the captain was not in a fit state to steer, for, with four of them to row, the crew might have made a better job of it.

Besides, although Fritz and Frank and James were in the full vigour of youth, and the boatswain was a sturdy fellow still, and all were thoroughly hardened to physical exercise, yet they were terribly weakened now by privation and

fatigue, A week  
had passed since they had been cast  
adrift from the  
*Flag*. "They had economised their  
provisions, yet  
only enough remained to last them for  
twenty-four  
hours. On three or four occasions they  
had caught